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MEMORIAL

D. S. CONANT.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS.

PROF. DAVID S. CONANT, M. D.

DELIVERED TO THE

GRADUATING CLASS,

IN THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT,

BY

A. B. CROSBY, A. M., M. D.,

PROFESSOR OF SURGERY,

WITH REMARKS AND RESOLUTIONS FROM OTHER SOURCES.

BURLINGTON:
TIMES BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

1866.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

PROF. DAVID S. CONANT, M. D.,

LATE PROFESSOR OF SURGERY IN THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, AND IN THE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF MAINE, SURGEON OF THE DEMILT DISPENSARY, N. Y., MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, UNITED STATES MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, N. Y., STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY, N. Y., PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY. N. Y., CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY, N. Y., OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY, NEW YORK. &c.. &c., &c., &c., &c.. &c.

BY THE
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT.
BURLINGTON, VT., JUNE, 1866.

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PROF. DAVID S. CONANT, M. D.,

DIED

IN NEW YORK CITY,

OCTOBER 8TH, 1865.

AGED FORTY YEARS.

He who has fearlessly and successfully crossed swords with Death in many a closely contested struggle, has fallen. The arrow tipped with an unknown and mysterious poison has pierced a noble victim, and laid the useful man low ere half his life of labor was done.

While we rejoice in the life of him who has been with and one of us, we acknowledge the justice of that Providence which interrupts his labors and deprives us of his services; and in the indulgence of our grief, we accept the instruction offered us by Him, who has removed the good man at the very time when he was in the full exercise of his most beneficial influence.

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ADDRESS.

BY PROF. A. B. CROSBY, M. D.

GENTLEMEN:

As we journey along the great highway of life, engrossed in its cares, and surrounded by its noise and dust, we are in danger of forgetting our mortality. Repeated escapes from danger, though exposed to war, pestilence and famine, render us self-confident and indifferent. Though daily witnessing disease and death, we almost come to believe that we "bear a charmed life." Ever at the study, as we are, this great lesson is never learned:

> "We are such stuff as dreams are made of,
> And our little life is rounded by a sleep."

The infant in its cradle may sleep the sleep that knows no waking, but we heed it little. It was pure and innocent. It was a frail thing at best. It was a tender bud, and the frost that nipped it was untimely. But it is well with the child, and we go our way.

The old man of four score sleeps well; why not? We know that we cannot so strengthen the spring, nor lengthen the chain but that the machinery of life will run down at its appointed time. The shock of corn just ripened for the harvest is garnered in. The full ripe fruit has fallen into the lap of earth. The brave old ship, baptized in many a storm has made its port at last. "Peace to his ashes," and so we rest content.

But when a man in the full flush of health—in the successful exercise of his powers, whose fame has not reached its zenith—yet whose life has been vindicated as a success, and whose removal is a public loss, not only to a community but to institutions of learning: when such an one crosses the narrow stream,

we instinctively turn aside from the great thoroughfare, and reflect that our lives hang by a thread, and that the fell archer is insatiate. Still more are we impressed if we have known the departed; if we have listened to his instruction; if we have shared his friendship. In the untimely death of Professor CONANT, such an event as I have feebly portrayed has transpired.

It seems peculiarly appropriate that here, where some of his most successful labors were achieved, where many, even of those now present, enjoyed his accumulated stores of learning and experience, we should turn aside from our usual avocations, to pay a fitting tribute to his memory, his labors and his virtues. I am well assured, that in thus dwelling on his brief, but successful career, we shall all derive those profitable lessons which the life of an eminent and good physician must always inculcate. More selfishly still I esteem myself fortunate, that as his successor in this College, I am enabled, by a consideration of his life, to learn something of the secret of his success, and to profit so far as I may by his brilliant example.

DAVID SLOAN CONANT was born at Lyme, N. H., January 21, 1825. His father was a carpenter, and entertained the opinion that every boy, whatever his inclinations might be, should learn a good trade, so, as he was wont to say, that he might have something "to fall back upon." Thus it happened that the boy in common with his other brothers, became an apprentice in his father's shop. He remained thus employed until the age of twenty-one, when the law gave him liberty to follow the bent of his inclinations. From all I can learn, the trade of a carpenter was always distasteful to him, but knowing his father to be inflexible, he obediently accepted his dictum, and brought to this humble calling the same industry and energy which subsequently rendered his professional career so successful. Inci-

dents of his mechanical skill and energy are still recalled, in which he excelled the most ambitious of his companions.

During this period of his apprenticeship, young CONANT had the usual advantages of the district school, and such other limited opportunities as a small New England village could afford. It was observed that he had a craving after knowledge, and eagerly passed his leisure hours in reading. He very early aspired to the profession of medicine, and read every medical book on which he could lay his hands. At the age of sixteen he united with the Congregational Church, and honored his profession of faith until his death. During his boyhood, he was obedient to his parents, exemplary in his conduct, energetic and industrious—yet he was full of sport and greatly enjoyed boyish pleasures, especially those of an athletic character in which he greatly excelled.

When his trade was well learned, he still felt the old cravings for knowledge. He accordingly entered an academy at Strafford, Vt., determining, if possible to fit for college. While thus engaged, he supported himself by working at his trade during the hours usually given up to recreation. At length he found himself well fitted to enter college as a Sophomore, but unfortunately an acquaintance, himself a graduate, advised him not to attempt a collegiate course. It was a never-failing source of regret to him that he accepted this advice.

He at once commenced the study of medicine under the instruction of Dr. E. C. WORCESTER, of Thetford. Not having the means with which to pay for a course of lectures, he went to Boston and worked at his trade until he laid aside $200.00, with which he attended a session at the Dartmouth Medical College. Even thus early, his father's words were proving true! his trade was "something to fall back upon." He here became the private pupil of Prof. E. R. PEASLEE, pursued the study of

practical anatomy under his instruction, and remained with him during the larger part of his pupilage. This association soon ripened into a friendship, mutually beneficial, and which continued until Dr. CONANT's death. As a student, he was earnest, exact, and untiring. He was still obliged to depend upon his own resources, and hence we find him now in a drug store, then at a carpenter's bench, or again assisting his instructor and benefactor. But wherever we see him, we note the same changeless determination, the same untiring industry that dared all things, that overcame all things.

Dr. CONANT was graduated as Doctor of Medicine, at Bowdoin College, in the year 1848. Both at Bowdoin and at Dartmouth, he filled the position of Demonstrator of Anatomy most acceptably to those institutions, and most profitably to their students.

In 1851 he removed from his native State to New York City. In the succeeding year, through the influence of his friend, Prof. PEASLEE, he was appointed Demonstrator of Anatomy at the New York Medical College, in 13th Street, and retained this position until 1860. At this time and subsequently, he drew around him a large class of private students, and his large experience in teaching them admirably fitted him for the positions he was destined to fill.

During 1854, cholera prevailed in New York, and Dr. CONANT was placed in charge of a hospital in Mott Street. Here, his untiring devotion to his duties, his zeal in making autopsies for the study of the disease, and the well digested results of these investigations which he presented to the Pathological Society, served to draw upon him the attention and approval of some of the most eminent physicians in New York. The good opinion thus early formed of him, his subsequent career fully confirmed. The same restless energy that took him into his pro-

fession would not allow him to remain satisfied with a position of mediocrity, and we are not surprised to know that he steadily gained in professional reputation. In 1857, on the resignation of his friend, Prof. PEASLEE, he was appointed to the chair of Anatomy in Bowdoin College, which position he held until 1862, when he was transferred to the chair of Surgery, and occupied this latter at the time of his death. Dr. CONANT was appointed to the chair of Surgery in this College in 1855, and continued to discharge the duties of the position until his death. Of his connection with this institution, you can tell me more than I can repeat to you. But I find it to be the universal opinion, that as a teacher, he was exact, comprehensive and forcible,—as a Surgeon, bold, courageous, and skillful: while as a man he was genial, upright and honorable.

During his residence in New York, Dr. CONANT filled various professional offices with entire acceptance. Among these were the positions of Surgeon to the Demilt Dispensary, and also to the Colored Home. Ever anxious to improve himself, he early became connected with various medical societies, where he not only received but imparted valuable information. He occupied the honorable position of President of the Pathological Society; he was a fellow of the Academy of Medicine; he was a member of the Obstetrical Society; he belonged to the New York Medical Association; he was a member of the New York County Medical Society, and during his last fatal illness was elected its Vice President. Even at the portals of the grave, professional honors were heaped upon him, and he went to his long home with the laurel fresh twined about his brow.

During these successive years his practice in New York had constantly increased until it had become both large and lucrative. I am informed that shortly before his death he had decided to resign his professorial chairs, and devote himself to the

more remunerative occupation of private practice. He had devoted himself most exclusively to his profession, never leaving home except for a professional object. Such a purpose, led him to volunteer his services after the battle of Antietam, and for several weeks he followed the army in the field, performing an incredible amount of labor. But he went beyond the limits even of his iron constitution, and contracted an intestinal disease, from which he never fully recovered. It was ever his custom to perform all the labor that was laid upon him, so long as his strength held out. Probably few men have greater powers of physical endurance than he possessed.

Dr. CONANT died in the city of New York, on Sunday night, October 8th, 1865, at the age of forty. He did not die until he had made a record and a name. His life was a success, yet we cannot forget that it had been a long hard struggle against obstacles of birth, of defective early education, of a trade which once learned would have weighed down to earth a common man; and we cannot but wish that he might have lived to gather the rich harvest his hands had sown—to enjoy the riches of a good name that he had already made, and to rest in the green pastures and beside the still waters which he was permitted to see only as a mirage in the desert. But, better so—infinitely better than to have lived too long!

Dr. CONANT was twice married. His first wife was MARY SANBORN, of Strafford, Vt., who was married to him in 1852, and died March 28, 1860, leaving a little boy who still survives. In 1861 he married MARY LARRABEE, of Brunswick, Me. The fruit of this union was a little girl who is still living. Mrs. CONANT had been for some time in feeble health, and the sudden death of her husband gave her a nervous shock, from which she never recovered. In four months after his death, on the 20th of February last passed, she too, crossed the "insuperable threshold."

Of Dr. CONANT's last illness and death, it seems fitting that we should speak. Fortunately, through the politeness of his friend, Prof. PEASLEE, I am enabled to give you a brief account of his disease and its termination.

Dr. PEASLEE writes of him as follows: "During the month of August last, he was almost constantly occupied by night and by day in his practice, and was constantly exposed to septicæmic influences. He had but little opportunity to recuperate in September, and on the last day of that month had a small furuncular inflammation on the right side of the nose. This was opened freely to the bone and at once faded away. The next day but one, (Oct. 2d) inflammation recurred above the incision referred to, and was in its turn, apparently subdued by a second deep and free incision. It returned a third time around and over the lacturnal sac, extended to the orbit, producing exophthalmia loss of sight of the right eye, and thence progressing backward through the sphenoidal fissure, it attacked the membranes of the brain, and proved fatal on the 8th of October.

In his relations to his professional brethren, Dr. C. was cordial, frank, genuine, and generous, and incapable of an unprofessional act. To his patients he was kind, faithful, and self-sacrificing to an extreme degree. As a citizen he yielded to none in public spirit and patriotism. But more, and better than all else, his was the life of an earnest and sincere christian; and in death he was sustained by the religion, which from his youth he had professed."

Such was the end of his life, and such the estimate of his character drawn by one who knew him well.

I have thus endeavored to portray the main incidents in Dr. CONANT's brief life from such material as I could lay my hands on. To his professional brethren, this imperfect record of his

well-spent life, is a sermon that inculcates lessons for our encouragement and improvement. By condensing the rays of his successful life on our own pathway, already somewhat illumined by our past experience, we shall gain new courage with which to take up the burden of life again, and shall go our way with a renewed and more exalted purpose. Were I addressing only gentlemen already active in the profession, I should feel that when the story of his life was told, the most eloquent eulogy would be silence—the most instructive lessons would come of introspection and reflection.

But you, gentlemen, are only on the confines of that arena where he used his sword and buckler to such excellent purpose. You are already knocking at the portals, eager to enter the lists and engage in honorable strife. Meanwhile, I cannot forbear to call your attention to certain salient points in the character of our deceased friend, which cannot fail to prove profitable to you, and which remain for the instruction of us all.

I had known Dr. CONANT, although never intimately, for twenty years. I shall speak of him as I have judged—so that I shall not exaggerate his virtues like a too friendly partizan, nor ignore them like an indifferent stranger. One sometimes judges more correctly of the proportions and symmetry of a structure at a little distance off.

In reviewing his life, I seem to myself to see *force* as the salient point of his character. It was the key note to the symphony of his life. It was the motive power which carried him irresistibly from small beginnings, in the face of great obstacles, to positions of well earned honor, trust, and emolument. In person, he was a little above the medium height, but somewhat spare and lithe. His wrists were very small, but his muscles were like iron. Good natured and kind hearted as he undoubt-

edly was, his physical force was something to excite the admiration of a friend, and the respect of an adversary. During his boyhood he greatly delighted in athletic sports. If there was an incredibly tall tree to be climbed, young CONANT could always achieve the feat. If there was a sedate trout of years and experience in any neighboring brook who had come to regard anglers with contempt, the same young gentleman was sure to woo him with such a coy bait, and yet with such successful audacity that the aquatic patriarch was sure to go the way of his less astute descendants. The "gentle Isaak" never had a more devoted or successful follower. The sharp crack of a rifle was music to his ears. With a fine muscular development and great steadiness of nerve, he became an excellent shot. Woe unto the unfortunate animal that once came within range of his telescopic sight. This constant exercise in the open air, conjoined, with his labor at the bench, rendered his physique magnificent. I am informed that when an apprentice, if challenged by any of the older workmen to accomplish some mechanical feat in a brief period of time, he invariably accepted, and accomplished the work within the limits set. He was accustomed to stand upon an eight inch block, and with comparative ease throw a sumersault backwards, alighting on his feet. This feat is not usually attempted, I believe, even by professed acrobats without the aid of a spring board. He thus came to the study of his profession somewhat rough and untutored in the worlds graces as he was,—with a vivacity that was irrepressible—with a physical force that laughed at labor and fatigue.

When he first became connected with the New York Medical College, the students were accustomed in the intervals between lectures to spar in the corridors for exercise, with boxing gloves. Dr. CONANT possessed all the requisites for a good boxer, except a knowledge of the "science" of self-defence. By close observa-

tion however, he soon mastered all its details and easily vanquished all competitors, including the champion of the class. This latter annoyed, that this burly New Hampshire man should have excelled him, induced a professional pugilist to present himself, with the understanding that he should punish Dr. Conant severely. Dr. C. very soon became satisfied that his antagonist was in earnest, and with a good natured smile, cautioned him not to attempt violence. Unmindful of the warning, his opponent struck a heavy blow at him, which although he warded by his arm, nevertheless staggered him. Quicker than a flash he put in an overwhelming blow that laid the pugilist at his feet. Blinded by rage, he sprang up and renewed the attack. Another straight hit from the shoulder again laid him low, and with such manifest signs of collapse, that he never asked for more. I have been assured by those who witnessed this passage at arms, that there were no signs of excitement or bad temper about Dr. C., but that his face wore an unruffled smile, while he calmly waited for a third assault, which never came.

I have sometimes thought that, with similar surroundings, if Dr. Conant had been born in New York, he might have been notorious as a gymnast or a pugilist. But the peaceful, law-abiding influence of his home and his native village, insured the concentration of his herculean physical force on thoroughly mastering his profession, and subsequently enabled him to exercise its functions with a zeal that knew no abatement, and with powers of endurance that are vouchsafed to but few men. His physical as well as his mental organization, was such that he could neither waver, nor hesitate in what he did. He struck the nail on the head, and he drove it home. With excessive burdens of labor, and fatigue he never seemed to hurry; he never ran; he was never out of breath. I fancy he had something of a contempt for men who did. But when he walked it was with a stride—and to a weary companion at his side, he seemed to possess the seven

leagued boots of fairy story. However gigantic the day's labor appeared at the onset, it was certain to be accomplished before he slept.

I should have hesitated to dwell upon these evidences of mere physical force, had I not been impressed with the fact that to it Dr. CONANT was largely indebted for his success in life. With him physical force was synonymous with strength, energy, application, industry, and their inevitable concomitant—*success*. We must not forget too, that this immense physical force that might have been prostituted to very ignoble purposes, was consumed in a most creditable professional development, and to the last fraction was devoted to the relief of suffering and disease. It was this element of physical force that enabled him to be always punctual, and to *do* that which he attempted. How many men with the highest mental culture, with many brilliant elements of success, have utterly failed, because they were associated with a miserably enervated physique. I confess that nothing impresses me as more magnificent, than the sight of a strong man. How infinitely exalted the spectacle becomes, when this God given strength is expended not for destruction, but production not for evil, but for good. As I revert in fancy to the laborious boyhood at Lyme—to the struggle for an imperfect preliminary education—to the courage and industry of the unaided medical student, and to the indomitable energy, and labor that brought him to the flood-tide of success before his death, I am impressed with the fact, that physical force cannot be esteemed an insignificant factor in summing up the elements that contributed to make his life a success. It is Richard of the lion heart, with his world renowned battle-axe, working like a laborer, fighting like a soldier, but winning the great battle at last.

If we now turn to the consideration of Dr. CONANT'S characteristics as a teacher, we shall find, I think, that *force* was the most striking element in his mental organization.

In the system of medical education as pursued at the present day, there are at best, many defects. The method of instruction by lectures, is attractive and may be rendered even brilliant. The various topics are presented in a manner more or less systematic. The points presented may be fully apprehended, and undoubtedly make an impression on the mind of the student. But such a plan of teaching, if alone relied on, is at best, only superficial. There is no royal road to learning. Intellectual wealth, like worldly treasures, can in the main only be attained by hard work. To gain knowledge, requires incessant individual labor, to retain it frequent repetition. The knowledge which we derive only from a lecture is not likely to make a lasting impression on the mind. It is like the dew that soon passes into vapor, 'tis

> "Like the snow falls on the river,
> A moment white, then melts forever."

Undoubtedly the best medical education, is one that is the result of systematic recitation. No man can be said to *know* a thing until he has mastered it so thoroughly that he can reproduce it. If one has so mastered a subject that he can give an intelligible, systematic account of it to others, then, and only then, can knowledge of the subject be considered his own. It is only such knowledge that a man can practically apply to supply the wants of the world. There are two sources of danger in almost every system of education. One of these is, that in seeking to render the student too definite and exact, we may cripple his ability to generalize, and his education may thus come to consist of an infinity of minor particulars. The other is that in seeking to avoid the first error, we may permit the student to study in such a desultory indefinite way that he can only attempt to generalize on very insufficient data—so that in the end he deals in the vaguest generalities. There is far more danger from the latter than the former cause. In the sci-

ence of medicine, nothing was ever known too definitely. In the past history of the world how proverbial it had become that medicine was the science of obscurity, and with the most exact and definite knowledge at his command, the medical man even now not infrequently finds himself groping. There are many observing men, but there are few good observers. The power to generalize is vouchsafed to but few men. There are multitudes in the world who may be exact, definite, and practically useful with their knowledge. It is only now and then that a genius, whose flight would be trammeled by the little points of exact knowledge, comes upon the stage. So for the future as in the past, the successful disciple of Æsculapius must strike his coin with a die. There must be line upon line and precept upon precept. For the dignity and honor of the noble profession to which we are devoted, let us hope that the medical colleges of our country may at some future day require the constant attendance of their students during the years of their pupilage. And let us labor that the recitation and the lecture, like the handmaids of our profession, Empiricism and Rationalism may go hand in hand, weaving a chaplet for the brows of successful scholars. The poorest graduates from such an institution, would I am sure, be respectable physicians, and the standard of the profession would gain immeasurably.

I should deem these few imperfect thoughts irrelevant, did I not fancy that Dr. CONANT entertained similar views, which in his own career as a teacher, he most fully carried out. I remember that as a medical student, he was remarkable for a ready apprehension of every point, for the tenacity with which he retained it, and generally for the exact definite character of what he affected to know. Fortunate in his own instruction, he so fully realized the advantage of clear didactic knowledge, that he spared no pains in teaching the large number of young men who resorted to him for private instruction. The value of such teach-

ing, and above all, of such a method is inestimable. For this, if for nothing else, there are many young physicians, who to-day can rise up and call him blessed.

Of his characteristics as a lecturer, many of you know far more than I do myself. I judge however, that he was not what would be called a fluent speaker, yet the subject was always treated in a systematic way. All points were clearly and definitely stated—important ones always reiterated. He was always dignified and forcible. I judge that he labored more to impress an important point than to be rhetorical, that he would never permit the gist of his subject to be subordinate to the phraseology.

His mental *force* is conspicuous throughout his career as an instructor. What he affected to know, he *knew*. What he said, he meant. What he stated, he could prove. He never spoke upon a subject until he had mastered it. You might have thought him brusque at times, but he was good natured, and ever ready to answer a question, however engrossing his duties might be. From the exact, definite character of what he knew —no less than the exhaustive way in which he investigated a subject, he was always an adversary to be respected.

He would sometimes rise in the pathological society, and make a statement so unique, that it would immediately give rise to discussion and comment. His face on such occasions always wore a half-smile of confidence and indifference. Such a manner in an ignorant man, would have been deemed impertinent, but with him, was only an exponent of an intelligent confidence. This was all the more manifest when he was required to defend the positions assumed. It was always found that the proposition stated was backed by such exact knowledge of the subject, and he was flanked and fortified so thoroughly, that his position was impregnable.

The rule of his life was the time honored aphorism *"lege mul-*

tum sed non multa." His esthetic reading was, I fancy, small, nor did his professional study cover a multitude of books. But when he read a book, he studied it,—when he seized upon an idea, he mastered it. He did not read many books, but he read *much*. What he read, became wholly his own, and he could reproduce it at will.

Like the man with one idea, he wielded a most trenchant weapon. Like the man of one book, ever dangerous to meet—he had only to strike, and victory perched on his banners. In the field of professional mind, it was not in the delicate finesse of the skirmish line, nor in the deceptive strategy of the out-post and picket that he excelled, but when out-post and picket were driven in—when the skirmish line had been forced back upon the main body, and reserves then—as was said of another: "he sounded his imperial clarion, and swept the field with an overwhelming charge."

Any estimate of Dr. CONANT'S character that should fail to notice his abilities as a surgeon, would of necessity be imperfect. For surgery he had a peculiar predilection, and had at the outset an unusual aptitude for this department of his profession. But in the practice of chirurgery, his characteristic *force* was the main-spring of his excellence.

Two points are essential to constitute a good surgeon. One is to know *how* to perform the requisite operation. The second, even more important than the first, is to know *when* to use the knife. "A good surgeon," says an old adage, "should have an eagle's eye, a lion's heart, and a lady's hand." These are indeed, the characteristics of an operative surgeon. He should be quick to see and apprehend the essential successive steps in an operation. He should be bold, courageous, and nothing daunted, whatever unexpected complications may arise. He should possess that delicacy of touch that goes before sight, and guides the knife just so far, and no farther. Aside from the knowledge

of Anatomy required operative Surgery is purely a mechanical pursuit. I have some times thought that with the requisite knowledge, a good butcher would make an excellent operative Surgeon. The better the mechanic the greater would be the skill of the operator.

But merely to use the knife dexterously, to perform an operation brilliantly, does not vindicate one's claim to the title of Surgeon. Coolness may come of indifference, or custom. The "tactius eruditus" may come by experience. The use of the knife is attained after a purely mechanical training. But above and beyond all these points the question obtrudes itself at the outset—shall the knife be used or not? In many instances an affirmative answer may be given to the question without a second glance Unfortunately, however, innumerable cases are constantly occurring where the decision is of the utmost moment, not only as far as the preservation or loss of a part is concerned, but as determining the question of life or death. To settle all these delicate points involves an amount of knowledge, an extent of experience and maturity of judgment that comes to but few men without a most laborious novitiate.

The consulting, and the operative Surgeon are two distinct entities, although they may be, and frequently are associated in the same person. The former is like the commanding general of an army, who surveys the whole field—weighs and sifts the testimony of spies and scouts, and finally determines whether to give battle or not. The latter is like the executive officer who receives his orders, and obeys them implicitly, though they lead to carnage and death. And by as much as the successful general attaining his purpose by a Fabian policy, without bloodshed—deserves the plaudits of humanity—by so much the conservative Surgeon is deserving of praise for the lives he has saved for the bodies he has preserved from mutilation.

If I have thus correctly estimated the characteristics of a good Surgeon, then would our deceased friend have stood the test, and well might he lay claim to the title. His early training as a carpenter, had given him a facility in the use of tools that proved invaluable to him in operative surgery. His eye was so correct, he judged so well of distances, his mechanical skill was so great that he did surgery with mathematical nicety. He was a bold, rapid, and accomplished operator. His knowledge of Anatomy was so definite that he never hesitated nor receded. With him Surgery meant war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt. As an operative Surgeon he had few equals, and still fewer superiors.

An instance illustrative of his coolness, and boldness may be briefly adverted to. On one of his visits to his home he found his father suffering from a cervical tumor. The disease had already developed to such an extent as to threaten suffocation by pressure on the trachea, and was manifestly malignant. Satisfied that the danger of sudden death was imminent, he determined to remove as much of the mass as practicable to relieve the pressure. In the course of the operation he came upon the carotid artery. Without any hesitation he applied a ligature and then extirpated all of the mass that could be safely removed. This operation gave great relief, and undoubtedly prolonged the father's life some months. It is not every Surgeon, however, that could use the knife on his own parent, for at best only a palliative operation.

But with him, the first question always was what is necessary? The sublime force of his will did the rest. Once assured of the right path he pursued it without any hesitation, or deflection. He could not be diverted by his good genius nor his bad genius. His deliberate conviction was ever too strong to be shaken.

Much as he excelled in the use of the knife, he never resort-

ed to it ruthlessly. He was intelligent in his profession, eager and ambitious, but he was conscientious and true. He esteemed it a greater honor to a Surgeon to save *one* limb; than to amputate *fifty*. He loved to wield the catlin and the scalpel, but he was prouder to preserve than to destroy. He was in the noblest sense a conservative Surgeon. Bold, fearless, successful, if the knife must come, conservative and unyielding as adamant, if the necessity did not exist. He was a man of decided opinions. He might at times have been deemed obstinate, had we not known that his conclusions were logically deducted from correct premises. In the problems of his life addition was his favorite process. Subtraction was unknown. The plus sign was always used when it could be—the minus sign only when it must be. His life was *positive*—positive of good—negative only of evil.

But it is time that this imperfect tribute to his character were finished. Had I known him intimately, I should have been tempted to draw aside the veil that screened his private social life, and should have drawn a picture of him as he was at home. I might have dwelt on his kindliness, his sense of honor, his probity, his temperance—his prudence, his love of home, of wife and child, his patriotism, and his irreproachable character as a christian. But these attributes of the departed can only be suitably depicted by one, who as a friend has been admitted into the sacred arcana of his home. With these holy mysteries the casual acquaintance, and the stranger can have nothing to do.

So I have dwelt only on those salient points in his character that came out conspicuously in his public relations. They were the elements of his professional success. They remain as beacon lights to guide the tempest tossed to a successful haven. Is there a Student here to-night burdened with poverty, but animated by a noble purpose? Let him read again the story of

this life, and take courage. Let him remember that with good habits a sound body and untiring industry he may win the crown.

"If," said a great Artist—"a man has failed, you will find he has dreamed instead of working. There is no way to success in our art, but to take off your coat, grind paint, and work like a digger on the railroad, all day and every day." Could the voice of him whose excellences we have imperfectly considered and break the stillness of the tomb, it would enjoin a kindred philososophy on all his professional followers. If you would learn the secret of his success, you must not fail to note that such a system pervaded his whole life from his boyhood to the last dread hour, when

> "He gave his honors to the world again,
> His blessed part to Heaven, and slept in peace."

Extract from the Introductory Lecture of Prof. Joseph Perkins, at the Session of Lectures, at the Medical Department of the University of Vermont, 1866.

Gentlemen:

It is our fortune again to meet in this College, to prosecute our annual course of studies,—to reassure the remembrance of the past and revive our anticipations of the future.

Every meeting of friends once parted, brings its memories; memories of joy or grief—of pleasures unrevealed, except in buoyant step and gladsome eye; of sorrows, spoken only by the saddened countenance—joys and griefs, which no stranger and not always a friend is made to share. Memories too, of common posession and interest; in which the social pleasure is enhanced, or the saddened heart is healed and made better in a common recollection and sympathy.

To you, who have returned to these seats you once occupied, to the Faculty of this College, there is, unavoidably present, such a memory. One whose eloquent tones and lucid teachings have been twelve years heard in these halls,—whose steady and cunning hand was ever ready to relieve the suffering and impart instruction in the weekly clinique; the counsellor of his colleagues and elder brothers; the friend and companion of the student—Professor Conant; is present, but in memory.

We look again for his vigorous form, we listen for his footstep—for his voice, never here, to see him—to hear him, but im memory.

But the good and the noble, the benefactors of men never die: their exit is only beyond the panorama of their lives. On that life picture, through all their varied toils and conflicts, we are allowed to trace principles to their results, causes to their effects, and effects to their consummation, in the individual life character of the present, and the sure and high rewards of the future.

It is not within my province or power to make complete the eulogy of the noble dead; for his high aspirations were not bound in a limited sphere, they went forth to the centres of learning, to the broad arena of thought and action and conflict, to gather larger breadths of knowledge and more substantial laurels.

From this standpoint,—on the life page of our friend, we may read, the self sustaining, self reliant, the successful student; the model teacher; the pioneer and yet conservative practitioner; the courteous gentleman; the true christian, culminating, beyond his years, in the benefactor of the profession and a good name, shining in its own lustre and inscribed high on the roll of his compeers.

The friend we commemorate, to admire and to mourn, will not return to us.—In this temple of medicine, the place of his devotions, let it be our purpose to follow on the bright pathway in which he traveled, to watch for his footprints in the difficult ascent of science. In this place and henceforth, let it be our purpose, to endeavour to imitate his self-reliance—his self-denial—his perseverance, his high aspirations and attainments—his social and christian virtues. Then may his mantle fall on us, a heritage richer than gold, being multiplied in us and our good offices; then we may go to him—we may receive his reward.

RESOLUTIONS RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF DR. D. S. CONANT.

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE.

At a stated meeting of the Academy, held October, 18th 1865, the following Resolutions offered by Dr. W. M. CHAMBERLAIN, were unanimously adopted.

Whereas, in the Divine Providence, Dr. DAVID S. CONANT, a fellow of the Academy, has been removed from us by death,

Resolved, That in him this body has lost an active and esteemed member,

Resolved, That, though thus early called from useful and successful life, by the force and breadth of his native endowments, by a worthy and elevated ambition, by assiduity in the study and practice of the Profession, by fidelity and humanity to the sick, by honor and courtesy toward his brethren, he had attained a prominence accorded to but few of his years, reflecting dignity upon the Institutions with which he was connected and the calling which he had chosen,

Resolved, That this expression of our esteem and sympathy be transmitted to the bereaved family and to the Faculties of the Medical Schools of Maine and Vermont, with which he was connected as Professor of Surgery."

Respectfully transmitted,

W. M. CHAMBERLAIN, M. D.,
Recording Secretary.

New York, Oct. 18th 1865.

COPY OF RESOLUTION PASSED AT DEMILT DISPENSARY, RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF DR. CONANT, FOR BURLINGTON MEDICAL SCHOOL.

At a meeting of the Physicians and Surgeons of Demilt Dispensary, held Oct. 14th, Dr WM. B. BIBBINS presiding, the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, in the providence of God, our friend and associate Dr. DAVID S. CONANT has been removed from us by death.

Resolved, That in this event, we personally and this Institution, have sustained a serious loss.

Resolved, That while we cannot, in these brief terms, fitly express the esteem in which we held him while living—some tribute of respect to his memory, is demanded alike by our own feelings, and by his admirable character, therefore

Resolved, That we recognized in him as a professional man, supreme devotion to his calling; excellent powers of perception, an independent logical method of thinking, a sound judgment, unfailing nerve, inventive faculty, address and dexterity—these qualities were sustained and applied by a temperament of uncommon energy and capacity for labor; controlled and directed by high moral principle and a just sense of honor; enriched and adorned by a cheerful temper and a generous humanity.

Resolved, That in tendering to the bereaved family of the deceased and to the Institutions with which he was connected, our heart-felt sympathy—we rejoice with them in the assurance that he was prepared to die, as well as to live, and has now entered upon the fruition of the christian faith, and hope, which he professed and honored before men.

Resolved, That the Secretary be instructed to transmit a copy of these Resolutions to the family of the dieceased, to the Faculties of Burlington and Bowdoin Medical Schools, and to such Medical and Secular Journals, as he may designate.

E. R. PEASLEE,
WM. M. CHAMBERLAIN,
STEPHEN ROGERS,
JAS. L. BROWN,
EDWARD BRADLEY, Secretary.

MEDICAL SCHOOL OF MAINE.

To the Medical Faculty of the University of Vermont,

GENTLEMEN:

At a special meeting of the Faculty of the Medical School of Maine, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That in the death of Dr. DAVID S. CONANT, late Professor of Surgery in this Institution, the College has sustained a heavy loss, and one, which will be deeply lamented by all connected with it—Professors and Students alike.

Resolved, That we shall ever cherish an affectionate remembrance of our late colleague, as a man of strict integrity and honor, of true professional enthusiasm and devotion, and as an accomplished Surgeon, a successful teacher and a christian gentleman.

Resolved, That by Dr. CONANT'S sudden death, the Profession has lost an eminent member, who had contributed much to its honor and of whom is yet expected much more, while medical science has lost one of its true and noble laborers.

Resolved, That, while we thus mourn for ourselves, the College and the Profession, we would not forget to tender to his family our warmest sympathy in their yet greater affliction, in the loss of a most devoted husband and affectionate father, and to commend them to His most gracious favor, who only can comfort the hearts of the widow and the fatherless,

Resolved, That the Secretary be requested to transmit a copy of these resolutions to the family of the deceased, and to the various Medical Societies, of which he was a member.

Respectfully transmitted,
C. F. BRACKETT, M. D., Secretary.

Brunswick, Dec. 1st, 1865.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT,
BURLINGTON, June 4th, 1866.

At a meeting of the Medical Faculty held this day, the following Resolutions relating to the death of the late Professor CONANT, were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, It has pleased the All-wise Creator to remove from our midst our late colleague Dr. DAVID S. CONANT, Professor of Surgery, therefore

Resolved, That in his death we deplore the loss of one whose great professional ability and high moral character, had already secured him a place in the first rank of American Surgeons. Possessing as a teacher the rare faculty of infusing his own enthusiasm into his pupils, he was thus enabled to impart instruction

with a wonderful facility, while the force and precision of statement with which he unfolded a subject dissipated all cloudiness from the minds of his hearers and left it indelibly impressed upon them.

As a practitioner in medicine he rose to eminence solely by the exercise of that indefatigable energy which never tired of study or research, but tracking knowledge to her secret lodes spared no efforts to unravel every thread of her mysterious web. He knew and felt the great truth of man's innate powers, and cultivating under insuperable obstacles the measure of talents bestowed upon him, rose steadily to a high place and well-deserved fame by his own self reliance and indomitable will.

As a colleague long associated with us in the field of instruction his most enduring monument rests in the hearts and memories of his pupils, while the story of his own eventful life furnishes a better incentive to stimulate youth to zealous efforts, than any text from which they could be addressed. Pure in mind—noble in nature and tender in all the relations which gild and hallow our social communings, we feel how small a part of all that is his due can be spoken by us, even with the glowing stimulus of friendship to prompt our utterance, or to lend a precious seeing to the eye.

Resolved, That we hereby tender our deepest condolence and sympathy to his bereaved family, and that these imperfect expressions of our sorrow and sense of affliction be transmitted to them.

SAMUEL W. THAYER, Dean.

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